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GRIZZLIES OPEN BASKETBALL SEASON
SATURDAY AGAINST UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN-STOUT

rosenthal/gf

11-21-77

sports state + Big Sky + basketball



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MISSOULA...

The University of Montana men's basketball team opens the 1977-78 season this Saturday, Nov. 26, against the University of Wisconsin-Stout in the UM Adams Field House. Tip off is at 8 p.m. MST.

Six lettermen return for the Grizzlies on a relatively young team. Senior co-captains Michael Ray Richardson and Jim Molloy will provide backcourt leadership. Junior forwards Craig Henkel, Charlie Yankus and Allan Nielsen bring varsity experience on the front-line with sophomore center John Stroeder (6-9½) adding size but inexperience to the starting contingent of lettermen.

Other than normal pre-season jitters, head basketball coach Jim Brandenburg has one main objective on his mind-establishing his young team as a winner early, and gaining early season confidence.

"We need to gain confidence early with a young club," Brandenburg said. "We will need to gain control of the game right away against Stout State and play with intensity. Then we'll need to maintain it. We must have immediate confidence in our ability to play well," Brandenburg said.

Brandenburg said he expects to play at least ten people quite a bit and hopes to find the best combinations.

"Despite having a young squad, we have more depth than we've had in the past, and several people will play a lot," Brandenburg said.

"Also, we think our home crowd will help us in the first game. This will be important to us because we spend quite a bit of the month of December on the road and we'll need the momentum."

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Although the University of Wisconsin-Stout will have gotten the season underway before the Grizzlies, it should be an interesting matchup for both clubs.

The Blue Devils do not have a player over 6-5 which will give the Grizzlies the advantage on the boards.

Top returnees for Stout include 6-0 guard Bruce Mueller who scored 11.3 points a game last year as a sophomore and 6-5 center Harvey Pearson who averaged 11 points a game last season as a freshman. Dave Olson, a 6-5 transfer from Northern Michigan, should help Stout on the boards.

The Blue Devils finished 10-16 last season and 6-10 in the Wisconsin State University Conference, good for a sixth place tie. The Blue Devils are somewhat inexperienced this season and lack real offensive strength.

Following the home opener, Montana plays Northern Colorado and Denver University on the road, Dec. 3 and 5. A Dec. 7 home game against Portland State, featuring the nation's leading scorer last season, Freeman Williams (38.8ppg), precedes the BYU Cougar Classic in Provo, Utah, Dec. 9 and 10.

Season tickets for Montana's 13 home games are still available at the UM Field House Ticket Office. The ticket office is open from 8-5, Monday through Friday. The phone number is 243-4051.

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